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Is your child safe?



Second Edition



Every year thousands of children suffer needlessly as a result of accidents in and around the home. What's so heartbreaking is that virtually all of these accidents can be prevented. All that's needed is a little foresight and extra care.

Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, and in particular the Product Safety Branch, is concerned and offers the following information to assist you in avoiding tragedy in your home.

Play it safe with toys

To a child a toy can be a world of wonders. But danger can lurk in a seemingly innocent plaything when it's in the wrong hands. That's why toys must be chosen carefully. The following are some important facts to keep in mind when shopping for toys.

Choose a toy suited to the child's age

A child will quickly lose interest in a toy that's too simple. If it's too complicated, the child will become bored. Always check the age labelling and safety recommendations for toys. And remember, toys belonging to older brothers and sisters might be dangerous for younger children.

Look for sturdy toys

Most toys are dropped, thrown, banged around and chewed on. Make sure they can weather such punishment.

A word about mobiles

Mobiles have rods and strings that could easily endanger a child. Make sure you hang them well out of reach of young children.

Read any instructions with the toy

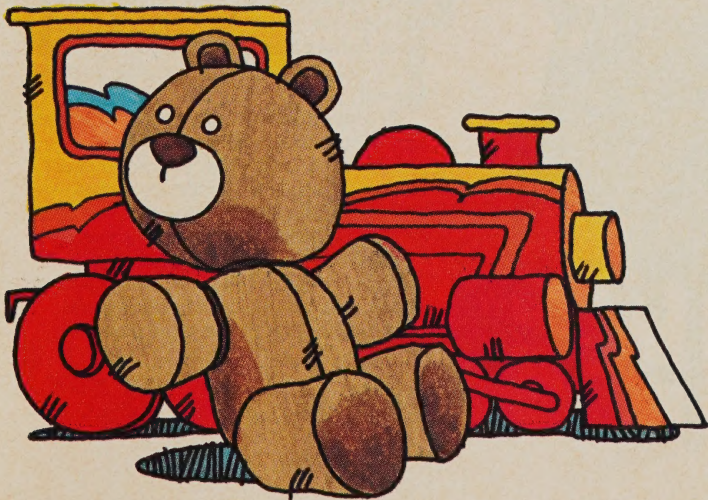
Some toys are meant to be used in certain ways. Show children how to use toys properly. They are meant to be a source of enjoyment, not tears.

Keep all toys in good repair

When a toy breaks, sometimes sharp points or edges are exposed. Keep such toys out of a child's reach, and repair them if possible. If they can't be repaired, throw them out.

Choose your child's toys carefully. Here are some shopping tips

- Buy the toy that's right for the child's age and know-how.
- Keep in mind who else in the house might play with the toy.
- Check instructions and really look the toy over.
- Show the child how the toy should be used so that it brings joy, not harm.
- If a toy breaks and sharp edges are exposed, throw the toy out.
- Watch the child at all times.



A safe high chair for your child

A high chair is a pleasant place for a child to view the world. But every year, several children are injured because of falls from their chairs.

To prevent this from happening to your child:

- Choose a chair with a wide, stable base.
- Ensure there's a seat belt with the chair, and that it's always used.
- Never leave your child unsupervised in the chair.
- Make sure the child's fingers, hands or head can't become entrapped somewhere in the chair.
- Never assume your child can't undo the seat belt or tray.
- Keep older children from climbing onto the chair, even if it's empty.



Choose your baby carrier carefully

Baby carriers can make life a lot easier for both parents. But they must be chosen with great care.

There are two distinct types of baby carriers sold on the market. The first is produced for literally carrying an infant, and may also be used as a seat in and about the house.



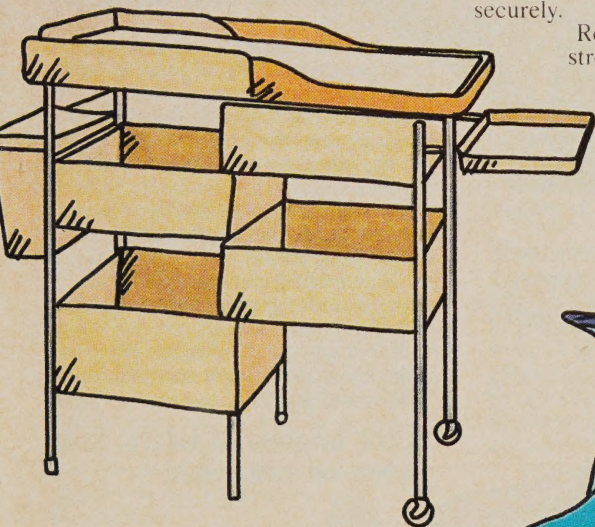
The second is intended primarily as an infant restraint system to protect the very young when they're travelling in an automobile. This, for instance, is the type pediatricians recommend parents use when they drive their newborn babies home from the hospital. They may be used for carrying a baby as well.

Before choosing either type, consider first where and how you are going to use it. If, for example, you need the carrier as a safety device in an automobile, make sure the carrier you're buying is intended for that purpose.

Information in this regard can be found on carrier labels and packaging, and should always be checked carefully before you make your purchase.

An unattended child could roll off a change table, a bed or other elevated surface

Babies should never be left alone when you're in the middle of dressing or changing them. If you're interrupted by the door bell, the telephone or for any other reason, your baby should be picked up and taken with you.



Use your baby stroller wisely

Accidents can still happen even when a child is tucked in a stroller. So use the restraining straps that prevent the child from falling forward and tipping it over. Never leave a child unattended in a stroller, and don't load the stroller with heavy packages that could upset its balance.

Give your stroller a regular safety inspection. Look for sharp edges and tears in the upholstery. Check to see that the brakes are working properly and make sure the wheels are fastened securely.

Regulations for carriages and strollers came into effect in 1985, so be careful with strollers purchased before this date.



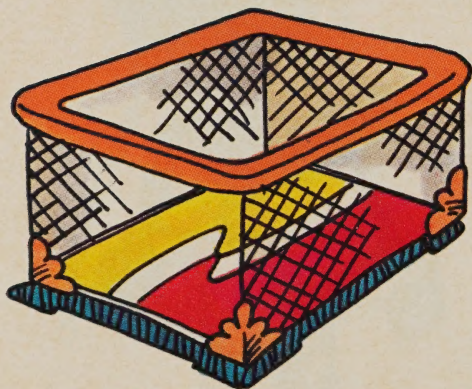
A playpen is the one place where a child should be safe

But children have been hurt in playpen accidents. Two infants choked to death when the shoulder buttons on their clothes got caught in the "jumbo" mesh of their older design playpens.

Tragedies like these can be avoided. That's why regulations for safer playpens became effective in September 1976 under the Hazardous Products Act.

It is now illegal to sell a playpen, new or used, mesh or wooden, which doesn't meet these requirements

- The mesh should be mosquito-type netting to prevent clothing, buttons or hooks getting caught.
- No playpen should have more than two wheels or castors, to reduce playpen movement.
- All playpens should be stable and sturdy with walls at least 48 cm high.
- All parts must be free from rough or sharp edges, and hinges should be designed to prevent pinching.



Take additional steps to protect your child by following these safety hints

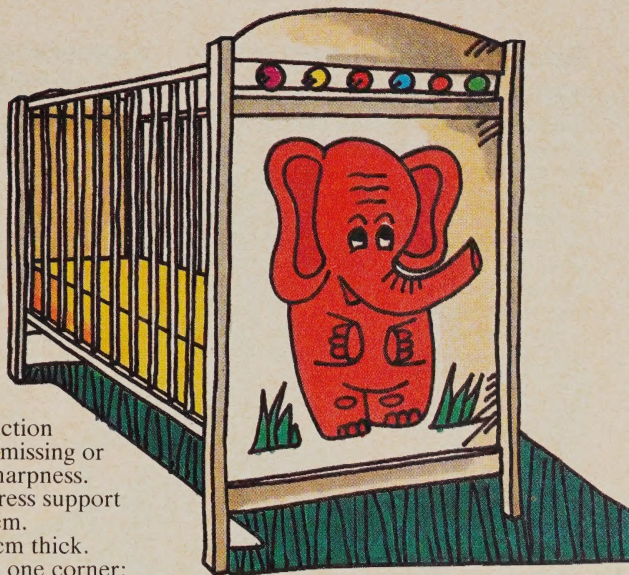
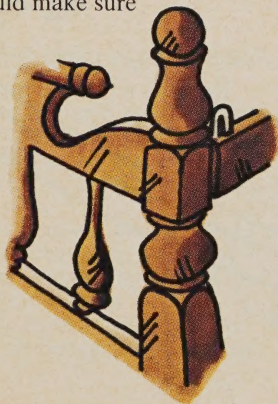
- If you have an older playpen containing wide mesh, make sure your child's clothing does not have buttons or hooks which could become entangled.
- Regularly check the playpen, and either repair or discard a damaged product.
- Check for loose parts.
- Check for tears in vinyl rails or mattress pads. Small pieces, if bitten off by the child, could cause choking or suffocation.
- Large (for example, stuffed) toys left in a playpen can be used as "steps" in attempted escapes.
- Ensure that the child is well clear of moving parts and hinges when erecting the playpen or raising or lowering its sides.
- Avoid scarves, necklaces or long pacifier cords that might catch or entrap your child.
- Once a child can climb out, the playpen no longer serves its purpose and should not be used.
- Never leave a child in the playpen if the sides aren't fixed securely in the fully raised position.

In the interest of safety, keep an eye on your child

Check your child's crib or cradle for the following safety features, especially if it was made before regulations came into effect in 1974

- No more than 6 cm between slats.
- Double lock on the drop side.
- Sturdy overall construction — no missing hardware, missing or broken slats, cracks or sharpness.
- Side height from mattress support to top rail of at least 66 cm.
- Mattress less than 15 cm thick.
- Push the mattress into one corner: there should be no more than a 3 cm gap between the mattress and the opposite side or end of the crib frame.
- Avoid very soft mattresses.
- Ensure each time before they're used that the mattress supports are securely in place.
- Avoid cribs that have corner posts, finials or cut-out headboard designs which could trap a child or clothing and lead to strangulation.

Once the crib or cradle is in use, parents should make sure that normal wear and tear hasn't created hazardous conditions.



There's a continuing need for crib maintenance and other safety precautions

- Look for loose parts that could come free and choke an infant or lessen overall durability.
- Always double-check that the sides are securely locked in place.
- Remove bumper pads and large toys when a child can reach a standing position; this is when such objects can serve as steps for climbing out of the crib.
- Children should never be tied or harnessed in a crib. Slack cords or elastics should be avoided as they can lead to strangulation.

WARNING: Adult water beds are designed for adults and shouldn't be used for infants.

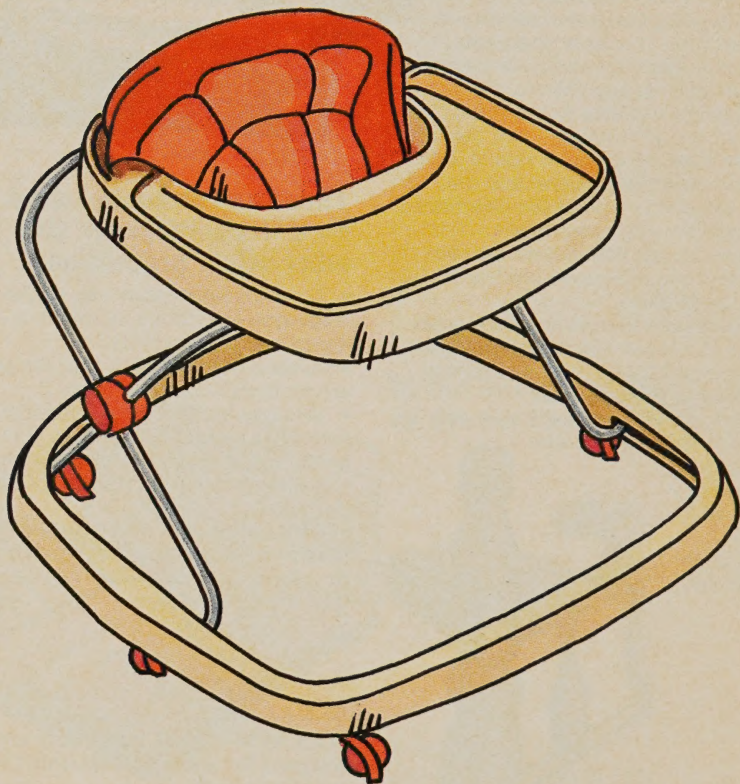
Babies in walkers need watching

Buying a walker for your baby is a serious decision. A walker increases the mobility of children, and this inevitably brings them face to face with dangers they're still too young to recognize. The dangling cord of an electric iron, or a table cloth that little hands can now reach. Open stairways are also very dangerous.

However, if you do decide to buy a walker never leave your baby unat-

tended in it. As an extra precaution, block all stairways by either closing the doors or installing gates. When buying a walker you should also:

- Look for one with a wide base that sits level on the floor. This way it won't tip when your baby reaches over for something on the floor or moves on to a carpeted surface.
- Select a sturdy model that won't collapse when you put your infant in it.
- Read the manufacturer's instructions to see that the walker is suitable for your baby's weight.



Store all chemical products out of the reach of children

Read their labels and use the warning symbols on them as a guide to handling these products.

Never leave plastic bags lying around

A child innocently playing with one could be suffocated. A good idea is to knot them before throwing them out.

Hidden dangers lurk where least expected

Even the seemingly innocuous baby's pacifier has been the cause of infant deaths.

Because of these deaths and several other "near misses" reported, the Product Safety Branch of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada developed pacifier safety regulations.

The regulations require that

- The pacifier should be designed with sufficient strength and durability to withstand reasonable force, even after repeated boiling, and it should not break down into easily swallowed components.
- The guard or shield should be large and rigid enough to prevent children from inserting the nipple too far into their mouths.
- Any cord attached to the pacifier should be short enough to prevent the

pacifier from being hung from the neck.

- All materials used in the pacifier should be non-toxic and, at the time of sale, sterile.



- Any ring or handle should be hinged, collapsible or flexible so that the pacifier can't be forced into the mouth if the baby should fall or roll on his or her face.

Although these regulations prevent most hazards caused by pacifiers, parents should check the condition of their child's pacifier regularly.



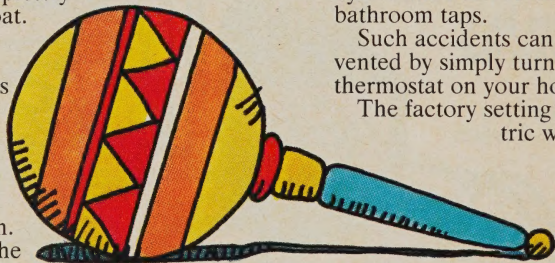
Your baby's rattle – is it just an innocent toy? It sounds pleasant and looks colourful – but what about the size?

Baby's habit of putting everything in the mouth presents problems for parents in choosing toys such as rattles.

Although most parents watch for breakable material that could be sharp, some rattles are small enough to be taken completely in the throat.

Rattles of certain dimensions can block air passages and cause death by suffocation.

Under the Hazardous Products Act, rattles must meet strict safety requirements.



Keeping your children out of hot water

Every year, young children across the country are admitted to hospital or treated as outpatients as a result of serious scalding, some suffering third-degree burns.

In most cases, the cause of their suffering hasn't been the boiling water of an unattended kettle or the spilling of the contents of a pot or pan from a hot stove. The children were scalded by the hot water from kitchen and bathroom taps.

Such accidents can easily be prevented by simply turning down the thermostat on your hot water heater.

The factory setting for most electric water heaters in 66°C.

Water at this temperature is hot enough to cause

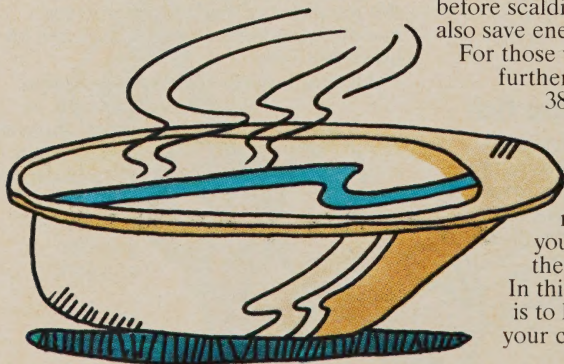
third-degree burns in two seconds. Gas heaters are set at 60°C which means water hot enough to produce severe scalding in only six seconds.

However, reducing the setting to 54°C would give parents a full 30 seconds to get their child out of hot water before scalding could occur. It would also save energy.

For those wishing to lower them even further, thermostats can be set to 38°C and still produce water hot enough for modern dishwashers.

If you live in an apartment or other multiple-unit type dwelling, you may not be able to reduce thermostat temperatures.

In this instance, the only answer is to keep a constant watch on your child's use of hot water.



Protect your children from fire

Too many young children die or are seriously burnt each year when their clothes catch fire. Recent statistics show the most severe burns happen when the child is wearing loose, flowing garments. In accidents where loose and flowing sleepwear caught fire, one child in three did not survive.

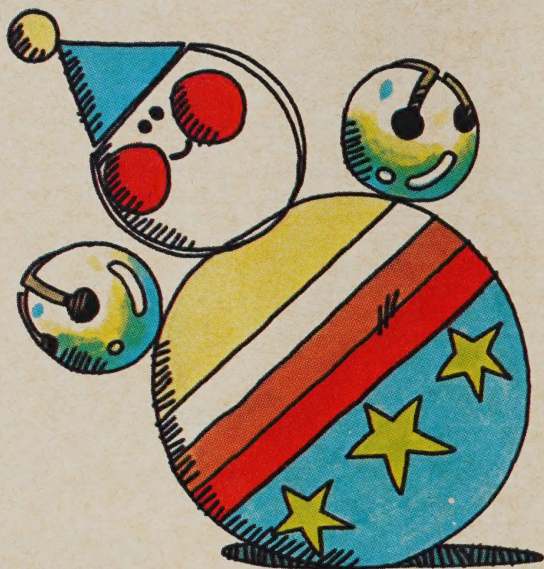
Statistics also show that a high percentage of such burns occurred either as a result of young children playing with lighters and matches or coming into contact with electric or wood-burning stoves or auxiliary heaters. Energy conservation efforts have greatly increased the use of alternative heat sources such as wood stoves, kerosene, propane and unvented space heaters. They have also increased the potential for fire-related accidents. To reduce the likelihood of accidents to children who are too young to

understand the dangers of fire, follow these safety tips:

- Place guards in front of open fires.
- Erect safety barriers around wood stoves and fuelled or electric heaters.
- Keep children away from the stove when in use.
- Place matches and lighters out of reach on a high shelf.
- Choose children's clothing with special care. Loose-fitting garments with flaring skirts or sleeves, ruffles and trimming ignite more easily and are more likely to brush against an open flame or other ignition source.



Play it safe



For more detailed information on
how you can protect your child
please contact your local office of
Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada,
or write to:
Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada,
Communications Branch
Hull, Québec K1A 0C9

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